

Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc.

February 18, 2009

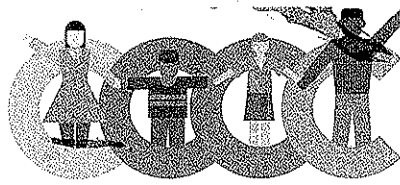
Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Galit Sharma, I am a Clinical Supervisor of the Nurturing Families Network at the Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc. in New Haven.

I am very concerned with the proposal to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund in our state and to transfer our program, the Nurturing Families Network, to the Department of Children and Families. I would like to ask you to consider the following:

The Children's Trust Fund promotes the health, safety and welfare of children and families in Connecticut and works to prevent child abuse and neglect. Through its programs, it reaches children and families who are most vulnerable, addresses their risk factors early and helps them cope and overcome their adversities before an incident of abuse or neglect occurs. This focus on prevention is a foundation of the Children's Trust Fund and its programs.

This is also the foundation of the Nurturing Families Network (NFN), a program that under the proposed budget will become a part of the Department of Children and Families. As you may know, families are fearful of DCF becoming involved in their lives. One of our main challenges in our efforts to reach families in need is to convince them that we are not connected to DCF. If our program will, however, become a part of DCF it will lose its preventive focus and the positive outcomes for families that we have worked so hard to achieve will be compromised.



Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc.

The well documented and heavily researched success of NFN is largely due to the support of the Trust Fund, the extensive training it provides to program staff and the unified structure of its multiple sites. In NFN, the Trust Fund developed a system that is continuously evaluated and have shown to be effective not only in reducing incidents of child abuse and neglect but also in strengthening families, helping at-risk parents become productive and self-sufficient, and helping families break out of the cycle of poverty.

Preventive services, when effective, are in fact money savers: reduction in the rate of child abuse translates to fewer children in the care of the state that the state has to provide for; parents who work yield a fewer number of families in need of welfare programs; and happier, confident children become happy, productive adults who don't need state assistance and don't end up in the courts and prison system.

I hope you will take these thoughts into consideration and oppose the proposal to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund.

Thank you for your time.

Galit Sharma
Clinical Supervisor
Nurturing Families Network
Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc.
131 Dwight St. New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: (203) 624-2600 extention 313
E-mail: gsharma@cccnh.org